

February 17, 2017

To the Appropriations Committee:

Although you are today your hearing at the moment, I hope that you can accept my comments as testimony.

Please do not cut funding for our State Parks. These are an invaluable resource that put money back into the economy and provide healthy recreational opportunities to people who cannot afford to travel to other states or countries for the chance to enjoy the outdoors. Here in Simsbury, people from urban centers come in the summer to picnic and swim at Stratton Brook State Park. The parks are great places to get away from the heat of summer, to get some exercise and socialize. When times are tight, places for those things that are inexpensive are critical.

Overall DEEP funding has been cut repeatedly. If you need advice or assistance from people working at the DEEP it is hard to get it now because they are already short staffed. Water quality in our rivers and lakes and along the coast depend in large part on DEEP funding. Air quality, pesticide regulation enforcement and enforcement of toxic waste disposal are all DEEP dependent: this is an agency that protects the public health and safety by protecting the environment. Further cuts leave these important aspects of life in CT at risk.

And eliminating the CEQ is just plain silly! Silly because it is such a low budget operation, using under \$200,000 a year and because it serves the citizens well in its role as a science-based watchdog agency and also provides an opportunity for citizens to bring forward environmental concerns which receive scientific scrutiny.

Please help the citizens and don't make any additional cuts in these three areas.

Sincerely,

Sally. S. Rieger  
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